

Commercial and Industrial Buildings,
Dubuque Oat Meal Mill Powerhouse
Seventh and Washington streets
Dubuque
Dubuque County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-160-AU

HABS
IOWA,
31-DUBU,
13-AU-

DRAWINGS

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

Dubuque Oat Meal Mill Powerhouse

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Site Location: Seventh and Washington Streets
Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa
DOT designation: Resource Site No. 8.29
Cadastral grid : SE1/4 SE1/4 S24 T89N R2E
USGS quadrangle: Dubuque South Iowa 7.5'
Lot dimensions : 106'x 290': .70 acre
Lot description: Lots 1 and 2 of Midwest Lumber
Company Place; Subdivision of
Lot 1 of City Lot 510; Lot 2
and Subdivision of Lots 10 and
11 of Lot 10, Block 15 of Dubuque
Harbor Company Addition.

Present Owner: Iowa Department of Transportation
Present Usage: warehouse
Present Condition : poor / fair

Overall Dimensions: 76'6"x 98'9"; two stories
Orientation : west
Architectural Plan type : 2-story rectangular, open-space warehouse.
Description : Foundation: coursed ashlar limestone perimeter walls
concrete slab first floor.
Structure : wood frame with masonry bearing and fire walls.
Ext. walls: common red brick laid in common bond.
Roof : flat composition roof with brick parapet walls.
Chimneys : three corbeled brick chimneys, interior, all
on the west wall.
Windows : painted wood 6/6 double-hung windows on 2nd
floor front of original block, positioned two
per bay; 12/9 sash on 1st floor (all but one
of these infilled with brick and smaller wood
sash), all with stone lug sills and segmental
brick heads made up of triple rows of stretch-
ers. On the rear of original block, the top
story windows are 8/8 double hung sash; 1st
floor windows are 12/12 double-hung.
Openings : large garage door openings cut into original
block's west and east walls; single-leaf door
with a deep reveal in north bay, all with plain
board enframements.
Details : modestly corbeled brick cornice on front of
original block. Painted lettering still
visible on front, between 1st and 2nd floor
windows: THE MARTIN-STRELAU CO.

Construction Date : 1882

Architecture Style: 19th Century Functional

Physical History : The Dubuque Oatmeal Mill was founded in 1882 with an initial capitalization of \$35,000 by Dubuque businessmen J.K. Graves, William Christianson, Thomas Wallace, H.L. Stout and J.P. Farley. That year the company constructed a mill on the corner of Seventh and Washington streets, beside a spur track of the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad. Reportedly costing \$35,000, the factory was a four-story brick structure with six 6-foot brick kilns on the first floor, an eight-stone grinding room on the second floor, three barley mills, a purifier and a cutting room on the third floor and a cleaning room (with one cockle, one brush, one grader and one purifier) on the top floor. A single-story office adjoined the main block on the south and on the north a one-story powerhouse housing a 150-horsepower steam plant. The company shipped its first barrel of Acme Oatmeal on October 20, 1882, and continued production throughout the 1880s under Graves' supervision, milling up to two hundred barrels of oatmeal per day.

Sometime before 1889 the Oat Meal Mill went out of business, and the building was taken over by the United States Electric Light and Power Company. The main block of the factory was demolished, and a one-story building constructed onto the south wall of the original powerhouse to house the company's three power generating dynamos. In 1892 the plant was purchased by the Star Electric Company, owned by B.E. Linehan. By 1909 the building had been converted into a furniture and household goods warehouse. Later the Martin-Strelau Coal and Wood Company took over the building and a frame addition was constructed on the south end. Today the building is used to store doors for Car-Ad-Co. The original powerhouse has undergone several alterations and additions over this extended period, including infill of virtually all first-floor windows, cutting in of large sectional doors, construction of a second floor within the original one-story space, and construction of a large, two-story frame side addition.

Significance: Founded by some of Dubuque's pre-eminent early manufacturers, the Dubuque Oat Meal Mill constituted a small-scale component of the city's burgeoning flour milling industry. Its relatively short life indicates the company's marginal nature. The mill itself has been razed, and only the powerhouse remains - a significant, though deteriorated, remnant of an important site.

References:

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Sanborn Insurance Maps: 1884, 1891, 1909, 1972.
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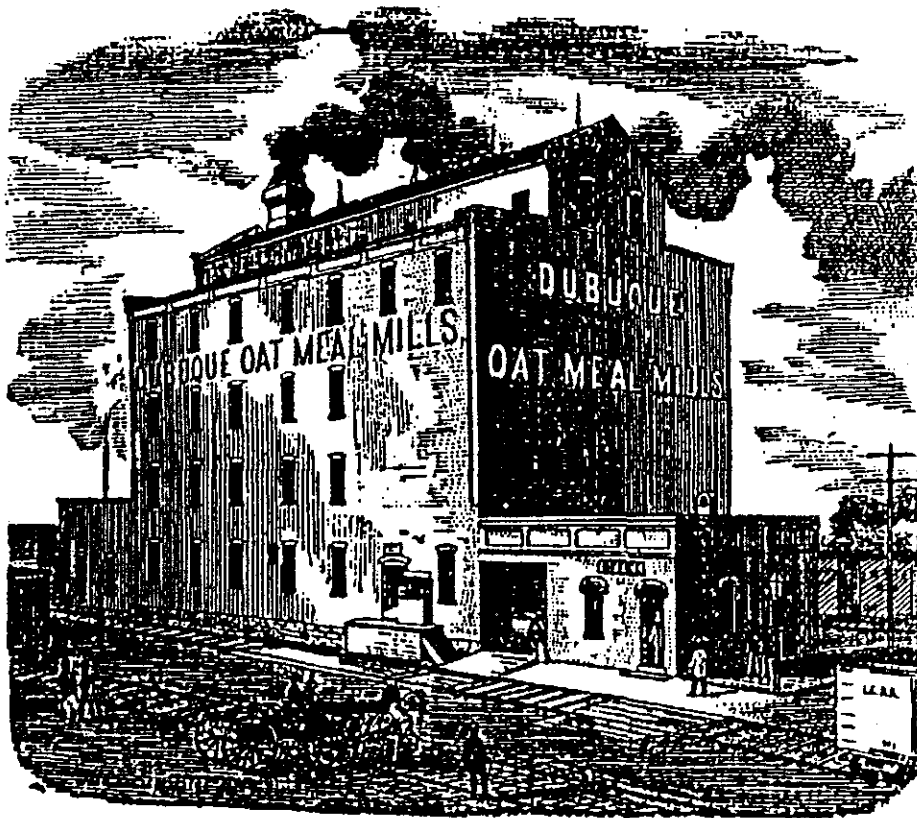
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Compiler:

Clayton B. Fraser, Fraserdesign, Loveland Colorado
December 1988.



DUBUQUE
OAT MEAL MILLS
Manufacturers of
Acme Steel Cut
Oat Meal
Pearl Barley
AND
GROUND
FEED,
Dubuque, Iowa.